

# The Interzone Poets

*Poems read the evening of December 13, 2005  
at The Café in Chicago, IL*

**FREE**

**No. 1**



Eel series, Francesca Woodman (1958-1981)

**Poets: *Nicole Manisco, Anne M. Kelly, and jason e***

# About the Authors

*Nicole Manisco* resides in St. Charles. In addition to writing and performing her own poetry, she's also an aspiring actor. Just recently she performed in Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman," which ran at the Steel Beam theatre in St. Charles. Feel free to contact Nicole at [pilgrimsoulfire@hotmail.com](mailto:pilgrimsoulfire@hotmail.com)



*Anne M. Kelly* is a local writer from Geneva. She finds inspiration from the natural world and the mystery of foreign lands that she has never visited. She also writes about the journey of pain, the trials of the human soul, and the beauty of redemption. Anne has a passion for finely crafted words and prose and enjoys sharing her collection of short stories and poems with other writers. Feel free to write Anne at [annekelly@mac.com](mailto:annekelly@mac.com)



*jason e* also resides in Geneva. His first book, *Kairos*, was self-published in 2004, and he is currently giving away free copies; just approach him and ask about it or send him an e-mail: [flowerpetalsonthecreek@yahoo.com](mailto:flowerpetalsonthecreek@yahoo.com). It can also be found at Anderson's Bookshop in Naperville, Towne House Books in St. Charles, and at Amazon.com & Borders.com.



*Life is but life, and death but death!  
Bliss is but bliss, and breath but breath!*

*-Emily Dickinson*

## flat line in baby blues

*by Nicole Manisco*

crystallized blue baby's breath stale,  
I battle to bring life back -  
make red the sinew, pink flesh temperate.  
and she was such a dear friend,  
sat there on the side lines in a bend.  
baby never cried.  
he never learned to say "it's not fair".  
breaking, I am out of air,  
empty in the lungs of life and luck.  
breathe, breathe  
blue, blue baby in baby blue.  
still.  
still she waits for heaven to ascend,  
waits for the robin to land on her chest.  
his chest still.  
still breath.  
behind the cover plate lies wires, bolts,  
nuts and metal unbecoming of a lady -  
unbecoming of solidarity,  
hers, his, ours, mine and I have lost the time.  
call it.  
call it lost and I am insufficient in all this chaos.

*It was my dream that screwed up, the stupid hearthside idea that it would be wonderful to follow one great red line across America instead of trying various roads and routes.*

*- Jack Kerouac*

## Skyscraper

*by Nicole Manisco*

I walked on the edge of groomed green fields where the slice between lush living and manmade pathway is a ravine for ones we consider insignificant. All the houses queued up; they were waiting for something amazing to happen, something beyond their white picket fences. My stride was moving-sidewalk grace, an ease of trained legs and brand new shoes.

Ginsberg's Sunflower was not so defiant there as I heard him say, look at that skyscraper. There was an erect silhouette on our clear-day sky hovering above a reticulum of suburban roof tops, infant tree lady-wrist trunks, mailbox soldiers at attention, the surmise of God and black top drives, newspaper slugs reiterating a surety of change and time –

I walked on to catch her surrealism. Ginsberg was sat on the curb reciting Blake.

Too far, too far,

I could have chased, but she didn't run, her summit situated in smoke-ring cloud shapes of innovation, progression, rooted in diversity and segregation.

Too far,

scraping blue smog fog of early morning to shavings of yesterday, today and tomorrow that huddled in gutters as last year's leaves,

too far,

beckoning me to come, to craft a demise of the cookie cutter, delegate my place in line, delete The Joneses, and carry out the dream.

Distance, a mere obsession of time and passage, forever defends her personal space making weary the little traveler.

Oh universe, oh mighty warrior how I long for you to sit beside me and sip tea, how I long to embrace your vastness, your barberry defenses and appreciate my surroundings before skipping off.

Still, I walked along comic strip lawns - droll manifestations of human's animal instinct to herd and their interest in lines with money-bought time.

The drones were suited in ivory, free of cobwebbed clothing, grimy automobiles, five dollar hair cuts, barbed wire smiles - - all their days free - - free as Manifest Destiny, paying no heed to spire sprouted weeds of far-off lands.

O Magnificent building, brilliant defiance of mundane petite dwellings, you were never more than another's dream, but you became mine

as I walked on mumbling something about opportunities having passed me by.

And I noticed, as your brilliance fed fishing line in one eye looping it through the other, as determination tugged to lift my head and reel me in,

I noticed the birds falling to V-formation, heading the other direction, while the human ants marched South.

So I snapped a photograph and tucked it under my arm as I walked back to 562, the little gray box with a red door. One day I'll forget, I'll be hunched over hobbling walls of institute white. One day I'll cough up crumpled skyscraper sepia and she'll call to me again.

And one day I will harden in the ground. I will become past-life weight on newfound flesh. I will thrust Earth's crust with the crown of my head and stand proud in the shadow of my dream.

# Sensibility

*by Nicole Manisco*

Once he told me that he wore  
black leather pants with a matching coat,  
that he was the broody bloke in a shower  
of white-winged angels sporting stylish halos.

Sometimes, when the blue takes charge,  
I free fall, cloud-shaped and fearful.

Yet, he did meet a girl in a hotel once.  
Once he fell wildly in love with the notion  
of love and America and a girl beside a pool -  
his watch fifty fast, but time perfectly endless.

Sometimes, when the clouds chase airplane wings,  
I run off after with his hand and jumper.

I've lost my senses before like a puddle  
collected by a pothole gone in the sun,  
in the lounge, in the City of Angels.  
Senseless. Timeless. But full of end.

Sometimes, when Oslo is farther by plane,  
I take to the stratus, careful not to over-shoot.

Fitting that nuns here cloak their canvas Chuck Taylor's  
under substantial sheets of black cotton. Fitting ever so.  
Disturbing that he can be the one to hold my hair  
when the sick flows, when hands are full or the wind blows.

Sometimes, when I am in the bath,  
I take apart what he has said and sew it back the way I want.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
do be gentle with friends.  
When their clouds have fallen,  
do be sensible and proper.

# In the midnight hour

*by Anne M. Kelly*

The moment is still, a life is still, a heartbeat is  
still.

The lace curtain that caresses the wind is now  
listless  
...in the midnight hour

The wind that floated by earlier is gently tucked in  
it's bed  
...in the midnight hour

The birds that graced the delicate branches  
and filled their chests with song...  
tuck their little heads under wing for the night  
to compose tomorrow's song...

They now exist in a world of their own.

The moon is the only one  
to hear the grand solo  
of the night.

# My Favorite Shirt

*by Anne M. Kelly*

I opened my closet door yesterday and saw the silhouette of a geometric price tag from a shirt I bought last fall. It's sharp rectangular edges protruded from the line of clothes that seemed soft and gentle, but unusually orderly that morning. It was a shirt I bought to wear for someone I used to love. I wanted to close the closet door quickly as the stabbing pain returned.

I started thinking about all of my favorite shirts, over time. I remember a strawberry shirt I had at age 6. How I loved to wear that during my summer days filled with nothing but play and sand. It had little cap sleeves that protected my shoulders from the blistering August heat. It was cotton, it was light it was fresh and it had strawberry buttons.

I remember a special shirt I bought in Montana at age 11. My Grandmother took me on a long trip to Glacier National Park. We left on a train. A train with elegant dining and bunk beds. The shirt I bought in the mountains of Montana was unlike anything I saw in Ohio. It was cream colored with suede laces. It had an earthy feel to it. The laces reminded me of smoke, crystal clear water, fresh air and Indians. When I wore that shirt it gave me a feeling of smoke that was rising from the mountains right into the heavens. It might have been a feeling of smoke, it might have been a feeling of clouds. It was not smoke. It was not clouds. It was clouds with the feel of smoke.

As with most vacations the train stops and you return home to the familiar. A life where you knew everything was safe and everything was predictable. But, you are never the same because you bring home part of what you saw, part of what you felt and part of what you became. I loved to wear my cream shirt with the



suede laces from the mountains back in the suburbia I grew up in because it took me away from the tree-lines streets into the mystical, magical mountains that were surrounded by rising smoke and settling mist.

When I was a teenager I would often buy a shirt for a date or party that I would go to. I picked the shirts out carefully. I was not particular about jeans, shoes or sweaters. Anything would do. I liked shirts that were cranberry colored and feminine. I doubt the boys that I saw, even noticed. They were boys. Boys who pulled any crumpled t-shirt out of their drawer 3 minutes before we met. I remember someone in particular, who said to me one night. Annie, I really love your shirt...and more I love the woman inside of the shirt. That stuck with me. It was then I knew I was no longer having relationships with boys, they were suddenly men....It felt warm like encircling smoke....

Last night I bought a beautiful shirt just because it was beautiful. I bought it for me. I bought it for the feeling I had when I tried it on. Maybe I bought it for my future. A future that is unknown, unsure and, at times, seems hopeless. But when I hung the shirt in my closet last night I had a warm feeling that it was the tangible thing that I needed to pull me into tomorrow. Tomorrow is further away, rather than closer, to the pain that has enveloped me. Tomorrow is a mysterious place right now. The smoke from the mountains is suddenly leading me back there. And mystery is the essence of that shirt that I bought in Montana at the age of 11.

# Pulse

*by jason e*

The morning is cool, quiet,  
set perfectly in place  
and her eyes are filled with it.

She kneels down,  
watches bees  
bend the silky petals  
of her favorite flower.

Time is a deific ox  
pulling her life forward, steadily  
and her eyes are splintered by it.

She stands up,  
hears a starling  
stream music from its breast;  
today it will find a mate.

With two fingers across her wrist  
and a mild concern in her heart, she thinks

*Where does the beauty of a flower go when it dies?*

# Sleepover

*by jason e*

On her back, veins warm with blood, sunk in cold leaves of grass. Temples sore, stoned by reverie, silent between rows of moon-colored tombstones; his sanctuary of rest. She clutches at her heart, counting stars without saying numbers, barely clinging to the skin of her soul.

Her thoughts are projected onto the silent-movie sky. There is such electricity in the senses when one remembers a subtle and typical thing: that *third* kiss, given quickly at the carnival for luck. A phrase spoken at the same instant, followed by sweet laughter. The things that reel people in, onto the same shore; of an island all their own. There are dozens of those remembrances tonight. She waters the grass with them, and it seems to grow tall and protective around her shape. At some timeless hour, she closes her eyes and faucet-drips into sleep.

At first light, as the sun pulls shadows across her tight, seashell body, a woman approaches with a Styrofoam cup of coffee. The moment momentarily gives way to opening-flower fragrances, the mute symphony of sparkling dew, and the dawn song of birds. The girl rises, without words; accepts the cup and sips. She is quiet but thankful.

The woman looks to her and manages a fragmented, but honest smile; for herself, and for this girl; the skeleton and beating heart of her son's happiness, so vital in his last hours. My angel, he'd said, close to his passing, with the brightness a known truth brings.

That day enters their minds as sunlight chisels and breaks away the nightly fragments. What remains in darkness will sleep, and sleep well. The woman looks to the girl, and the girl is looking away; neither aware that they are sharing the same memory, at the same moment, as they begin to walk, hand in hand, towards the car.

# Last Words

*by jason e*

I hear you in a dream calling out.  
Searching for that someone  
you have never known. I sit alone  
in a rotating corner—shadows forming  
all your favorite shapes.

My dream-self does not know  
where it belongs in such dreams.  
Always wishing it could tell you  
that I am findable. That in your equation  
I can be proven.

You've seen my silhouette, coming off the walls  
you walk along. It hinders the burning sun for you;  
is a barrier when it's cold.  
But have you looked closely, lately?  
*Look now.*

And though not in the shape of a crown  
or a single, confident rose,  
it is not a dangerous thing.  
It is not meaningless.  
Did you even know, you're its maker?

These are the things I want to tell you.  
But my dream-tongue must hold.  
It holds because I know that in the place  
where we actually speak  
we are speaking our last words.

# The Interzone Poets

**The Interzone Poets** will be a series of chapbooks created specifically for poetry events. In them will be all or most of the pieces that each "Interzone Poet" has read. Other poets have already signed up to be included in future "issues" when they read at upcoming events.

If you yourself are interested in displaying your work in an upcoming printing, please let one of us know and we'll make the necessary arrangements (see inside bios for contact info).

Finally, I do hope you've enjoyed listening to our poems tonight, and that you'll take this chapbook home and read them again and again. Contact any one of us if you'd like to know where we'll be reading next. Unfortunately there is no website available for posting such things, but I'm hoping to get one up and running soon.

Thank you for your interest and your support of the arts!

*jason e ~ interzone poet*